DCPS Reform Priorities of the Fenty Administration[1]

Introduction

Despite more than two decades of intermittent reform efforts, the public education system in the District of Columbia continues to struggle to meet its fundamental obligation: ensuring equal access to an excellent education. It is indisputable that the school district is well-populated with children eager to learn and professionals eager to teach. But these good intentions, far too often, do not translate into good outcomes.

In our frustration with this legacy of failure, as a community, we have turned to explanations that place solutions out of our reach:
- "The cycle of poverty is too difficult to break."
- "Children only spend one-third of their day in school."
- "The deplorable state of our facilities makes it difficult for teachers or students to concentrate."
- "Collective bargaining agreements limit creativity."
- "Parents don't do enough to support their children."
- "The central office is too bloated."
- "Charter schools are draining limited resources."
- "The government under-funds public education"

Reasonable people can disagree about the relative merits of each of these explanations, but these explanations in the aggregate separate us from a deeper truth – *our schools reflect our community*. So the answer to our dilemma rests in our willingness to work together as a community on a focused set of goals that are transparent and measurable. Having agreed on these goals, we must then agree to hold each other accountable for our performance in advancing them.

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[1] Special Education reform priorities are addressed in more detail in a separate document.

Purpose, Context and Inspiration

Under the leadership of the current Superintendent, DCPS has articulated a new Mission, a set of Core Beliefs and Commitments, a Master Education Plan (MEP) and a Master Facilities Plan (MFP). The Fenty administration recognizes these reform principles and documents as the product of significant community involvement. We are committed to them as the starting point for our reform efforts following the passage of the District of Columbia Public Education Reform Amendment Act of 2007.

This document highlights the starting points for the next stage in reform of the District of Columbia Public Schools. Many of these have been adopted already by DCPS, but not fully implemented. Others were not discussed explicitly in the MEP, but support the implementation of MEP objectives. The priorities outlined here are not intended to be all-encompassing.

As the process of education reform is an evolving one, this will be a living document. It takes the aspirations and initiatives of the MEP as its foundation, but also borrows and builds on the experiences of previous reform efforts in DCPS. It also looks to reform efforts in District of Columbia Public Charter Schools and other school systems throughout the United States.

Specifically, this document is informed by:

- "A Nation At Risk," National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983[2]
- The Committee on Public Education Report, "Our Children, Our Future"
- The 2001 DCPS 5-Year Strategic Reform Plan prepared by McKinsey & Co.

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[2] http://www.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/recomm.html

- The 2004 Council of Great City Schools report, "Restoring Excellence to the District of Columbia Public Schools"[3]
- The 2005 Council of Great City Schools report, "Financing Excellence in the District of Columbia Public Schools"[4]
- The 2005 District of Columbia Public Schools "Declaration of Education"[5]
- The 2006 District of Columbia Public Schools "Master Education Plan"[6]
- "Double the Numbers for College Success: A Call for Action," District of Columbia, 2006[7]
- The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Strategic Plan 2010[8]
- The Massachusetts 2020 Extended Learning Initiative[9]
- The National Early Literacy Panel of the National Institute for Literacy
- "Put Reading First," Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement[10]
- The CYITC/Wallace Foundation Out-of-School Time Initiative
- The 2006 Board of Education White Paper on Special Education[11]
- A range of performance management systems being developed nationally, including:
  - Baltimore City Public Schools SchoolStat System
  - School District of Philadelphia SchoolStat System
  - Montgomery County Public Schools M-Stat System
  - Charlotte-Mecklenburg Balanced Scorecard System
  - Edmonton Alberta Satisfaction Survey

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[3] http://www.cgcs.org/pdfs/DCPSReportFinal.pdf
[4] http://www.cgcs.org/pdfs/DCfinance.pdf
[5] http://www.k12.dc.us/declaration/DCPS%20exec%20summary_English.pdf
[6] http://www.k12.dc.us/master/MEP_final.pdf
[7] http://www.seo.dc.gov/seo/frames.asp?doc=/seo/lib/seo/news_room/2006/DoublingNumber_FINAL.pdf
[8] https://extranet.cms.k12.nc.us/news/stories/internetNews/pdf/11A29A200664350AM.pdf
[9] http://www.mass2020.org/
[10] http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/publications/PFRbookletBW.pdf
[11] http://www.k12.dc.us/DCps/boe/SPED-Paper_0106.pdf

- "Financing Alternative Education Pathways," National Youth Employment Coalition, August 2005[12]
- The NYC DOE Multiple Pathways Strategy[13]
- The Columbia Heights Shaw Family Support Collaborative Gang Taskforce
- The Miami-Dade Public Schools Parent Academy Program[14]

As this list demonstrates, public education reform has become a widespread priority across the United States. While implementation varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, many of the core initiatives have been adopted and replicated broadly. These commonly replicated initiatives rely on a number of generally–accepted principles, including the following:

- Early literacy mastery is critical to sustained growth in achievement.
- Mastery of fundamental abstract mathematical ideas by middle school is critical for higher level math achievement in high school.
- Early intervention in literacy can mitigate subsequent behavior and special-education challenges.
- Truancy is highly correlated to the incidence of dropping out.
- Middle school experience is a critical determinant of high school experience.
- Early exposure to the benefits of college and the challenges of college courses increases interest, performance, and persistence in college.
- Access to a diverse set of alternative education options (neighborhood-based and standalone) can be critical in addressing behavior, truancy, and retention in middle school and high school
- Targeted, school-based or "embedded" professional development is more effective than mass-delivered professional development.

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[12] http://nyec.modernsignal.net/content/education/exec_summary_profiles.pdf
[13] http://www.ytfg.org/documents/Presentation_to_Regents_Broad_Distribution.pdf
[14] http://theparentacademy.dadeschools.net/

- Quality professional development and a strong career ladder are key determinants in the retention of high-performing teachers and staff.
- Integrating real-time student performance data into instruction throughout the academic year impacts student achievement more than relying on high-stakes testing.
- Transparent accountability systems aligned with professional development are more effective than accountability systems that are difficult to understand or viewed as arbitrary or punitive.
- Incentives and other recognition programs help attract high-performing teachers to low-performing schools.
- Consistent implementation of discipline policies is critical to establishing a positive school climate, which contributes to student & teacher performance.
- The type and degree of central office support needed by local schools varies widely and should align with individual school needs and performance.
- Aligning central office performance measures and school-level or student achievement performance measures reduces "bureaucratic compliance" and unresponsiveness at the administration level.
- School district central offices should focus on functions central to teaching and learning.
- Public engagement and communication are critical elements in building a constituency to support sustained education reform.
- Constructive and regular parent/school engagement facilitates student achievement.

The Vision

To secure the District of Columbia's place as an indisputably world-class city, we must have a world-class education system. We recognize that the goal of making DCPS the public school system of choice seems audacious. However, as a community, we must recognize that our future generations deserve better. Our reference point must move beyond our own historical performance or that of other urban jurisdictions and beyond the United States itself. We must seek to transform DCPS into the premier urban public education system among world capitals and ensure that all graduates are prepared to excel in college and in a competitive regional and global economy. It is an ambitious goal, and one this Administration will pursue tirelessly.

This endeavor toward excellence will demand an intense focus on student success above all else, a strategic prioritization of resources, and relentless attention to implementation. More than anything, it will require unwavering commitment and hard work on the part of thousands of adults within the school system and across numerous District agencies, as well as by parents and community members.

Measures of Success

While standardized testing can only tell part of the student achievement story, it is the easiest method of tracking and comparing student performance at the most basic levels. At the local level, we will continue to track the progress of our students using the District of Columbia Comprehensive Assessment System (DC-CAS). At the national level, the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) will be our yardstick, and at the international level, the District of Columbia will investigate the possibility of tracking its performance on the Trends in International Math and Science Study (TIMSS) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), the two most widely used international measures of student performance.

Our starting point is sobering. We have seen the data, perhaps so much that it ceases to enrage us in the way it should. On average, our students are performing poorly by any measure. Moreover, the data reveal a stunning achievement gap between white students and students of color.

We will seek to raise the performance of every student. We will work with speed and resolve to intervene aggressively on behalf of our lowest-performing schools and students, but only as a beginning. We will also seek to increase the rigor, options, and performance of even our highest-performing students.

The Task at Hand

Many of our students are challenged by circumstances outside of the schools' control, such as poverty and primary languages other than English. But there can be no excuses. Significant research indicates that schools and teachers can have an enormous impact on student achievement despite the outside challenges a child brings to school. We will seek to ease the burden on schools by addressing the social issues impacting our students' ability to excel. But we also must move forward aggressively to drive high levels of achievement despite these obstacles.

We have taken the first bold step toward eliminating the artificial boundaries between DCPS and the network of agencies controlled by the Executive Office of the Mayor. But this change is only the first step. Success will require a change in mindset across the board. We must earn the trust of educators, support staff, parents, students, and the community at large by demonstrating that business as usual is no longer acceptable. In return, we will demand investment and hard work from all of these stakeholders.   Across the District Government, we will demand agencies define their roles and measure their outcomes from a new vantage point. The failure of any child will be a collective responsibility.

Fundamental Ingredients to Success

While success will ultimately depend on dozens of smart strategies, several overarching approaches will ground all that we do.

Human Capital
The school system must attract and retain talent. The best-designed plan is only as good as the people who carry it out. School-based support staff and central administrators alike must have the skill and will to attain challenging goals. Attaining our goals, therefore, relies heavily on recruiting effective personnel at every level, and building their capacity through meaningful professional development.

Exceptional Service
The school system must serve its stakeholders. Students, parents, teachers and administrators should feel free to express their needs and concerns. They should also feel confident that DCPS will respond effectively.

Strong System of Accountability Balanced with Autonomy
The school system must adapt and grow. Addressing the diverse and changing educational needs of the District of Columbia requires freedom, flexibility and accountability in the central office and in every classroom.

Data-Driven Decision Making
The school system must measure. Accurate data will help administrators assess learning and make informed decisions to promote student achievement. To ensure that school data is properly utilized in DCPS, the Chancellor will institute an accountability system referred to as SchoolStat. A detailed description of SchoolStat is included in the Appendix.

Timeframes for Action

Beginning the work detailed in this document is critical – we must act with the same urgency as the challenges presented. Yet it is also important that the work be informed and that steps taken are strategic. Thus, the timeframes specified in this document are approximated and represent the intention and prioritization of the administration regarding the proposed activities. It may be necessary to adjust the timeframes in order to correspond with information and recommendations developed through internal reviews of the system management, operations, and finances. Review of these timeframes will be ongoing throughout the transition period, and will be updated as necessary.

Goal I: Ensure Challenging Curriculum and Instruction for All Students[15]

Strategy 1: Refine the K-8 comprehensive reading model (Expands initiative articulated in Master Education Plan)

Activity	Timeframe (subject to effective date of Legislation)	Outcome/Measurement
Assess all K-3 students at the beginning and end of each school year. Use these data to inform short-term reading intervention strategy. Students identified as struggling will receive developmentally appropriate intensive reading support, including additional time focused on receptive and expressive language and pre-reading skills. Intensive intervention will continue until students can meet grade level performance standards.[16]	Develop standardized reading assessment protocol by the end of the 2007-2008 academic year, so teachers can be trained. Develop intensive reading curriculum and associated intervention strategies within 180 days of the transition of authority.	Conduct and analyze reading assessments at the beginning of each school year for all K-3 students. Key tracking measure for principals; (see SchoolStat). Should drive allocation of resources. Conduct end-of-year reading assessments for all K-3 students. Data analysis will include measurement of percentage of students who have changed status from struggling to proficient, or the reverse.
To boost reading performance in Grades 6 through 8, students reading below grade level will be enrolled in reading class taught by trained reading specialist, until grade-level proficiency is achieved (in addition to their standard language arts class).	Pilot additional reading class in two middle schools for second semester of 2007-8 academic year (potentially as part of Expanded Learning Time pilot – see below)	Analyze intervention, including comparing gains among the treatment group of students with a control group at another middle school.

Strategy 2: Refine the K-8 comprehensive mathematics model (Expands initiative articulated in Master Education Plan)

Activity	Timeframe (subject to effective date of Legislation)	Outcome/Measurement
Students struggling to achieve grade level standards in middle school will receive	Pilot double math class in two middle schools for 2007-2008 academic year,	Analyze intervention, including comparing gains among the treatment

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[15] Goal from the Master Education Plan

[16] See "Put Reading First," Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement, National Institute for Literacy, http://www.nifl.gov/

intensive interventions until they meet grade level standards.[17]

Math coaches will train teachers up front and support them on an ongoing basis through model lessons and classroom observations. | based on Kamras model developed at Sousa. *Option for Expanded Learning Time school.* | group of students with a control group at another middle school.

Potential replication across system. |

Goal I: Ensure Challenging Curriculum and Instruction for All Students

Strategy 3: Accelerate intensive intervention strategies lowest performing high schools (Expands initiative articulated in Master Education Plan)

Activity	Timeframe (subject to effective date of legislation)	Outcome/Measurement
Identify high schools that qualify for reconstitution and begin development of intervention strategies.	Begin planning immediately. Implementation of intervention strategies beginning in 2008-2009 academic year. Activity will be ongoing.	Comprehensive design and implementation plans, reflecting fundamental change in approach at these schools.
Increased graduation rates.

Strategy 4: Begin reform initiatives targeted at middle schools. (Expands initiative articulated in Master Education Plan)

Activity	Timeframe (subject to effective date of legislation)	Outcome/Measurement
Target middle schools for Teacher Advancement Program	Within 60 days, identify one school to begin model in Fall 2008.	Secure private investment within 90 days.
Explore creation of Eight-PLUS program[18], which would provide mandatory intensive remedial instruction for students who do not pass eighth grade.	Analyze research on 8+ interventions in other jurisdictions within first 100 days.	Recommend whether to implement program and establish timeline for next steps.
Align with strategy to increase graduation

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[17] See the Massachusetts Department of Education Middle School Math Initiative (MSMI) at http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/progs/mathscience/descriptions/mass_sea_midschmath.pdf and "An Examination of School-Based Factors Affecting the Grade 8 Mathematics MCAS Performance" at http://www.ednews.org/articles/999/1/An-Examination-of-School-Based-Factors-Affecting-the-Grade8-Mathematics-MCAS-Performance/Page1.html

[18] Multiple school districts throughout the United States, including Charlotte-Mecklenburg, have proposed the use of an Eight-PLUS program for struggling eighth-graders who require remedial instruction in order to move on to ninth grade.

		rates at the high school level.
Intensive "double math" – see above.		

Strategy 5: Expand access to more rigorous courses at the high school level. (Expands initiative articulated in Master Education Plan)

Consistent with the CYITC/Wallace Foundation program, expand middle school out-of-school time programs including academic, enrichment, and athletic programs.	Assess current offerings by end of first 6 months.	Increase student engagement (including attendance) and achievement.
Expand purview of Executive Director for Advanced Studies to all advanced-learning programs across all high schools, including but not limited to: • Add or expand college-prep programs such as Springboard, AVID, or other AP Incentives Programs. • Partner with area colleges and universities to expand middle or early college programs, such as the programs at Bell Multicultural High School and Friendship Collegiate Academy PCS. Provide the option of 2-year AP courses, where students commit to "looping" with teacher, providing them extra time to close the preparation gap.	Redefine and staff position within first 100 days.	Comprehensive strategic plan within 60 days of staffing this newly defined role. Increase graduation rates.

Goal I: Ensure Challenging Curriculum and Instruction for All Students

Strategy 6: Pilot extended learning programs through a competitive grant program (Expands initiative articulated in Master Education Plan)

Activity	Timeframe (subject to effective date of legislation)	Outcome/Measurement
Explore extended learning pilot as possible vehicle for: • Increased preparation opportunity for AP courses. • Additional time for science • Double math or intensive reading course in middle school • Music and fine arts, using external partners as providers • Foreign language programs • Regular sustained professional development for teachers	Develop RFP within 90 days. Award planning grants by December, 2007.	Implement up to five schools in 2008-09.

Strategy 7: Communicate performance data to parents and students regularly and consistently. (New initiative)

Activity	Timeframe (subject to effective date of legislation)	Outcome/Measurement
Redesign student report card. Develop a district-wide K-8 report card that provides meaningful information on student progress toward state standards.	• Establish a Report Card Committee within 60 days. • Develop and publish the new report card within 90 days after creation of Report Card Committee. • Conduct report card training sessions for teachers within 60 days of publication of new report card template.	Begin report card implementation in conjunction with the 2008-09 school year.
Redesign DC-CAS parent report. Create a standard template with supporting	• Identify models from other jurisdictions within 60 days (Chicago	Include question on parent satisfaction survey.

information (including information on SES alternatives, etc.) for reporting individual DC-CAS results. Parents will be empowered to make informed decisions about their child's schools.	is one) • Draft template within 4 months	Publicized and distribute using a variety of communication channels, including meetings, Channel 99, the DCPS website, print materials, email, Connect-Ed and other tools.

Goal I: Ensure Challenging Curriculum and Instruction for All Students

Strategy 8: Expand Career and Technical Education (Expands initiative articulated in Master Education Plan)

Activity	Timeframe (subject to effective date of legislation)	Outcome/Measurement
Break ground on Phelps.	2007-08 school year	Construction on schedule.
Replicate Cardozo building trades program in two additional high schools.	Begin working with community partners immediately.	One additional program operational by 2007 school year; a second by 2008.
Partner with labor unions to strengthen programming and tie to key initiatives in apprenticeship programs across District.	Pull together working group of these partners within 90 days.	Comprehensive menu of potential partnerships, timeline for implementation.
Partner with WMATA and other major skilled employers to develop certified HS training programs.	Implementation timelines established by Spring 2007.	Comprehensive menu of potential partnerships, timeline for implementation.

Strategy 9: Expand foreign-language instruction at all grade levels (New initiative)

Activity	Timeframe (subject to effective date of legislation)	Outcome/Measurement
Expand the availability of bilingual-immersion programs across the city, particularly in wards east of the river.	Identify potential school sites during 2007-08 school year and begin implementation in 2008-09.	Increase rigor and attractive programs of choice for parents, and increase equity in access to programs across the city.
DCPS will expand partnerships with area embassies and cultural institutions to increase the foreign language program offerings at all grade levels.	Identify partners during 07-08 school year; begin instituting programs in Spring 2008.	Significantly expand offerings.
Given the research-based consensus that early exposure to foreign languages	A phase-in process will start in the 2009-10 school year.	

facilitates foreign language mastery and that students mastering second languages outperform monolingual peers in verbal and non-verbal skills as well as standardized college entrance exams, DCPS will explore the expansion of foreign language programs to serve elementary and middle school students.[19]		

Goal I: Ensure Challenging Curriculum and Instruction for All Students

Strategy 10: Expand opportunities for gifted and talented students (Expands initiative articulated in Master Education Plan)

Activity	Timeframe	Outcome/Measurement
Research creative programming in public charter schools and in other jurisdictions for potential replication within DCPS.	Consult with NAGC within first 6 months.	Better identify GT students. Increased quantity and quality of services.

Strategy 11: Address the needs of English Language Learners (ELLs) (Expands initiative articulated in Master Education Plan)

Activity	Timeframe	Outcome/Measurement
Train principals to meet the needs of ELLs.	Ongoing, through principals' leadership institute.	
Expand Parents as Partners program.	Assess capacity within first 6 months. Program expansion to begin in 2008-09 school year.	Question on parent survey.

Goal II: Teachers and Principals Will Deliver High Quality Instruction to Every Student[20]

Strategy 1: Develop a talent pipeline for teachers, teacher leaders, and principals (Expands initiative articulated in Master Education Plan)

Activity	Timeframe (subject to effective date of legislation)	Outcome/Measurement
Front end recruitment of high quality	Work to begin immediately; ongoing.	See SchoolStat below

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[19] See recommendation A6 of the 1983 report, "A Nation at Risk," at http://www.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/recomm.html
[20] Goal from the Master Education Plan

Activity	Timeframe	Outcome/Measurement
teachers and principals: • Explore expansion of alternative certification programs such as the DC Teaching Fellows program. • Expand the Teach For America program. • Partner with the higher education and private sectors to develop incentives supporting the recruitment of high need, low supply teachers (e.g., special education and mathematics).		
Develop career ladder for teachers – into teacher leadership roles (mentor, master, coach) and into the administration.	100 days.	Comprehensive overview of current career ladder opportunities (teacher leadership positions, leadership training, etc.); timeline for addressing identified needs.
Develop SchoolStat measures for human resources department. Create a bonus program for HR to reward its efforts for opening the school year with no vacancies and/or meeting recruiting and staffing targets.	60 days	SchoolStat 'data dashboard'[21] with HR specific indicators, including percent of teaching positions filled by the first day of school and throughout the school year.

Goal II: Teachers and Principals Will Deliver High Quality Instruction to Every Student

Strategy 2: Improve teacher working conditions. (New initiative)

Activity	Timeframe (subject to effective date of legislation)	Outcome/Measurement
Establish an independently administered	Develop RFP within 60 days.	Develop, administer and analyze survey in

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[21] The term 'data dashboard' has been used extensively in the private sector for many years, and recently has gained acceptance and utility in the public sector, particularly in public school districts. It refers to a single place of reference for a collection of data points or indicators that enable the user to get an overall sense of performance in real time according to pre-determined metrics of success. A common way to describe a data dashboard is to think of the dashboard display in a car – above the steering wheel where it is easily in view, providing to the driver information on speed, fuel, operating systems, safety, etc.

		accordance with time line.
school survey to collect teacher information on working conditions. Require that concerns raised in survey be addressed in school improvement plans. Data will be disaggregated by school, maintaining the confidentiality of individuals.	Identify vendor within 90 days. (Possible project for research consortium; see below), Complete survey administration within 6 months.	Data will serve as SchoolStat measure for principals.

Strategy 3: Refine professional development for improved instruction (Expands initiative articulated in Master Education Plan)		
Activity	**Timeframe** (subject to effective date of legislation)	**Outcome/Measurement**
Conduct an audit of DCPS professional development programs to catalogue range of programs, assess quality, and prioritize based on strategic goals.	120 days.	Report assessing strength of professional development program and making recommendations for improvements.
Institute school-based professional development models on a pilot basis, focusing on building the capacity of teachers to collaborate, analyze data and adapt practice accordingly, and for principals to implement and lead school wide reform strategies.	Expand CIT/NLNS/TFA partnership to 2-3 more schools in 2007-08 school year. Identify schools within 30 days. Investigate feasibility of introducing TAP in 1-2 schools for 2007-08 school year.[22]	Implementation plan. Assess and improve the capacity and effectiveness of the Principals' Leadership Institute.
Assess current implementation of New Teacher Induction and Mentoring program and adjust as necessary to meet original goals of program.	120 days. Institute aggressive mentor recruitment program to generate strong pool of candidates.	Fully staffed mentor program, in compliance with grant requirements.

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[22] The Teacher Advancement Program, TAP, is a school-level professional development and performance pay program developed by the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching.

Goal II: Teachers and Principals Will Deliver High Quality Instruction to Every Student

Strategy 4: Recognize and reward high-performing staff with individual and school wide compensation initiatives.

Activity	Timeframe (subject to effective date of legislation)	
Implement the differentiated compensation pilot in the current WTU contract.	Where possible, roll out models for 2007-08 school year or establish planning year.	Implementation plan.
Explore additional salary and bonus initiatives for targeted schools, based on rigorous standards of evaluation, including: • Rewarding principals for meeting targets on school climate and parent engagement measures. • Rewarding teachers for achieving advanced performance-based certification	Analysis of options and discussions with WTU to begin immediately.	Summary of options and agreed upon implementation plan.

Strategy 5: Ensure equitable staffing for every school. (Expands initiative articulated in Master Education Plan)

Activity	Timeframe (subject to effective date of legislation)	Outcome/Measurement
Explore the creation of incentive programs aimed at increasing the number of high-performing teachers at low-performing schools, such as signing and performance based bonuses, and tuition reimbursement programs.	Begin analysis immediately.	Summary of options analysis and agreed upon implementation plan.
Adjust school-level budgeting process to	Begin budget analysis immediately.	Established for 09 budget.

allocate real dollars, rather than teaching positions. Schools could then allocate any "extra" funds towards teacher professional development or support.
Current teachers would be grandfathered in, at the principals' discretion.

Goal III: Safe & Orderly Schools

Strategy 1: Ensure student discipline policies are enforced consistently throughout school district. (New initiative)

Activity	Timeframe (subject to effective date of legislation)	Outcome/Measurement
Revise the current student discipline policy to include alternatives to out of school suspension. Offer training to principals and teachers on the new policy. Develop a handbook that will be distributed to principals, teachers, parents, and students to ensure that all parties are aware of the new policy.	Begin policy revision immediately.	Implement the revised student discipline policy at the beginning of the 2007-08 school year. Monitor school performance measures via SchoolStat.

Strategy 2: Reorganize and expand alternative education programs. (Expands initiative articulated in Master Education Plan)

Activity	Timeframe	Outcome/Measurement
Expand range of alternative education programs including increasing neighborhood school-based models and stand-alone models.	Conduct an assessment and evaluation of existing alternative education programs. Assessment will begin within 100 days.	Expand programs where gaps exist to serve more students.

Goal III: Safe & Orderly Schools

Strategy 3: Train teachers and principals on best ways to handle student behavior issues. (New initiative)

Activity	Timeframe	Outcome/Measurement
Partner with experienced community-based organizations to provide professional development opportunities focused on student behavior management (including bullying and gang activity).	Search for community partner will begin immediately. Develop a professional development action plan for phased implementation during the 2007-08 school year.	Incorporate professional development strategy into professional development calendar.
Evaluate evidence-based whole school behavior management models for possible implementation in local schools. Review effectiveness of current program implementations, such as the Positive Behavior Intervention & Support (PBIS) program being used locally at DCPS schools (e.g., Simon ES) and DC public charter schools.	Evaluation will begin at the conclusion of the 2006-07 school year.	If successful, PBIS will be expanded.

Strategy 4: Continue/expand the work of the Truancy Task Force (Expands initiative articulated in Master Education Plan)

Activity	Timeframe	Outcome/Measurement
Expand work of the task force to include focus on dropout prevention and re-entry strategies.	Truancy Task Force will begin expansion work during the 2007-08 school year.	Reduce dropout rate and return more students to the school system.

Goal IV: Develop a Strong System of Accountability *Balanced with School Level Autonomy*[23]

Strategy 1: Develop a systemwide SchoolStat accountability system. (New initiative)

Activity	Timeframe (subject to effective date of legislation)	Outcome/Measurement
Identify first set of tracking measures around special education, human resources, and school climate.	60 days.	Develop data dashboards for key functions.

[23] Goal from the Master Education Plan

Orient all employees to concept, philosophy, and process of SchoolStat	60 days.	
Bring all managers through a process of identifying their top level tracking measures	180 days.	Develop department-level dashboards for every function.

Strategy 2: Establish data infrastructure and research partnerships that allow effective analysis. (Expands initiative articulated in Master Education Plan)

Activity	Timeframe (subject to effective date of legislation)	Outcome/Measurement
Implement state-wide data system with unique student and teacher identifiers.	Immediately and ongoing.	95% accuracy of student identifier system by the end of the 2007-08 school year. "Bad data reports" feed into a SchoolStat measure for principals.
Initiate "Schools Research Consortium" that would provide capacity to inform policy decisions.	90 days.	Establish independent entity.
Partner with researcher to kick-off value added study of teacher effectiveness	Identify researcher and research question within 60 days. First round of analysis within 9 months.	Ongoing analysis of teacher value-added by source of teachers, professional development programs.

Goal IV: Develop a Strong System of Accountability *Balanced with School Level Autonomy*

Strategy 3: Shift resources and decision-making to the schools, and away from the central administration. (Expands initiative articulated in Master Education Plan)

Activity	Timeframe (subject to effective date of legislation)	Outcome/Measurement
Develop a transparent and phased-in program for earned autonomy with strict accountability measures.	Establish baseline within first 100 days. Identify currently operating models of autonomy in DCPS and clear opportunities (e.g., innovation pilot schools).	Timeline and targets for phased in implementation for first 24 months.

Goal V: Ensure Exceptional Service

Strategy 1: Conduct a comprehensive service audit and service improvement program. (New initiative)

Activity	Timeframe	Outcome/Measurement
Develop a program to baseline and assess responsiveness to stakeholders across communication channels (in-person visits, phone calls, email, etc.)	Begin audit within 100 days. Create a service improvement program with the results of the audit.	Develop solutions for improving satisfaction levels , addressing such issues as organizational culture, goals, employee incentives, service processes, communications, and service measures.
Develop an incentive and recognition program that encourages and rewards high quality service delivery.		

Strategy 2: Develop service standards. (New initiative)

Activity	Timeframe	Outcome/Measurement
Establish service standards by department or activity. Integrate service standards with employee performance management system.	Begin standards development within 100 days.	Implement standards system wide.

Goal V: Ensure Exceptional Service

Strategy 3: Provide service training and communication on customer service initiatives. (New initiative)

Activity	Timeframe	Outcome/Measurement
DCPS will provide ongoing employee training and communication on customer service initiatives and on techniques to improve quality and process.	Training will be ongoing.	Offer customer service training to all DCPS employees, including principals, teachers, and administrative staff. Align service training with newly implemented service standards.

Strategy 4: Strengthen employee communications. (New initiative)

Activity	Timeframe	Outcome/Measurement
Strengthen internal communications through multiple channels including Connect-Ed, email, DCPS Intranet, DCPS-TV99, meetings, special events and other communication channels.	Begin work on the internal communications program during the 2006-07 school year.	Inform DCPS employees about news and information on a timely basis.
DCPS will start an employee feedback system to monitor satisfaction levels and to identify key issues and concerns. We will develop print and online versions and will poll employees annually to determine the success of communications and job satisfaction.	Distribute annual survey to teachers at the conclusion of the 2006-07 school year.	Analyze survey results and report annually to the Chancellor and executive staff. Make changes as needed.

Goal V: Ensure Exceptional Service

Strategy 5: Business operations improvement.[24]

Activity	Timeframe	Outcome/Measurement
Conduct comprehensive operational review to identify short and long-term opportunities for service improvements and efficiencies. Priority areas include personnel, procurement, Medicaid recovery, and food service.	Convene teams to evaluate key business operations within 100 days. These teams will compare best practices and benchmarks to actual in-house performance and develop improvement plans for each operation.	Improve service outcomes on SchoolStat measures identified during audit.

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[24] Goal 2 of the DCPS 2005 "Declaration of Education" states: "Ensure management and operations support high-quality teaching and learning in every classroom in every school."

	Implementation of the improvement plans will begin during the 2007-08 school year. Business operations will be evaluated on an ongoing basis.	

Goal VI. Build on Our Community's Assets[25]

Strategy 1: Create an Office of the Ombudsman. (New initiative)

Activity	Timeframe	Outcome/Measurement
Partner with the Executive Office of the Mayor to implement the proposed ombudsman program.	Begin communication regarding the existence of the Office of the Ombudsman within 100 days.	The Office of the Ombudsman will resolve concerns in a timely manner and identify opportunities for systemic improvements as appropriate.

Strategy 2: Improve communication and collaboration with parents and stakeholders. (Expands initiative articulated in Master Education Plan)

Activity	Timeframe	Outcome/Measurement
Develop new parent communication strategy. Develop new parent handbook, parent newsletter, and other communication tools. Partner with neighborhood based organizations (private and public) to distribute communication tools.	Begin development of parent communication strategy and tools within 100 days.	Inform parents of the programs, services, and support DCPS has to offer.

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[25] Goal from the Master Education Plan

Goal VI. Build on Our Community's Assets

Strategy 4: Increase public involvement. (Expands initiative articulated in Master Education Plan)

Activity	Timeframe	Outcome/Measurement
Communicate regularly with parents, school employees, public and private sector leaders as well as leaders in the faith community in order to get their input.	Establish a working group, charged with recommending strategies to improve communication between DCPS and community stakeholders, within 100 days. Public engagement will be ongoing.	Increase collaboration between DCPS and other stakeholders via regular meetings, opinion polls, and advisory committees designed to seek input from the public about decision making processes at DCPS.
DCPS will initiate a feedback system for key stakeholders, including students and parents. Satisfaction with DCPS' responsiveness will be gauged annually using statistically valid public opinion polls.[26] Distribute service feedback cards to all schools and departments, as well as made available online, with results monitored and reported annually to the Chancellor.		Increase responsiveness to parent, student, and community concerns. Acknowledge concerns/complaints within 24 hours. Offer solutions within 30 days.

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[26] Multiple school districts throughout the United States, including Charlotte-Mecklenburg, have proposed the use of statistically valid polls or satisfaction surveys as a feedback or accountability system. In Canada, the Edmonton Public Schools have a long history of surveying stakeholders and include these survey results in their annual performance reports. For an example, see the 2005-2006 Edmonton Public Schools Annual Education Results report at http://www.epsb.ca/datafiles/AnnualEdResultsReport_0506.pdf

Goal VI. Build on Our Community's Assets

Strategy 5: Expand community partnerships /volunteerism. (Expands initiative articulated in Master Education Plan)

Activity	Timeframe	Outcome/Measurement
Develop partnerships in the community that promote student academic success, student mentoring and a safe environment. Review current programs and recommend changes if necessary. Partner with faith leaders to provide additional support for DCPS students, especially those who may be at risk of failing in school.		A better organized office of strategic partnerships and more invested volunteers from local business and other community entitities. Increased volunteerism in DCPS schools.

Strategy 6: Increase Principal Accountability for Parent and Community Outreach (Expands initiative articulated in Master Education Plan)

Activity	Timeframe	Outcome/Measurement
Include effective proactive parent & community outreach as part of principal accountability framework.	Principals will receive training on ways to provide effective outreach to parents and community members. Amend principal evaluation instrument to include measurements for parent and community outreach beginning in the 2008-09 school year.	SchoolStat Measures. Amended evaluation instrument.

Strategy 7: Host regular media briefings. (New initiative)

Activity	Timeframe	Outcome/Measurement
The Chancellor's office will hold regular media briefings to inform reporters and the public about DCPS news and information.	Begin regular briefings within 100 days.	Increase level of transparency between the public and DCPS. Release regular media briefing schedule.

Goal VI. Build on Our Community's Assets

Strategy 8: Partner with EOM's Office of Parent & Community Involvement to launch Parent Academy. (New initiative)

Activity	Timeframe	Outcome/Measurement
Provide training to parents through Parent Academy courses in areas such as: GED, computer skills, family literacy, and other basic life skills. Organize these courses by partnering with local private and public sector groups and offer them free of charge at schools, public and private sector workplaces, and libraries.[27]	Begin implementation of Parent Academies in the 2007-08 school year.	Increase parental involvement in the education process, which has been shown to have a direct and positive impact on student achievement.

Strategy 9: Strengthen Local School Restructuring Teams (LSRTs). (Expands initiative articulated in Master Education Plan)

Activity	Timeframe	Outcome/Measurement
Strengthen LSRTs so that they can focus on school improvement planning and student performance.	Provide training for administrators and parent leaders beginning in the 2007-08 school year.	Stronger school improvement plans and budgets.

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[27] Miami-Dade Public Schools introduced a "Parent Academy" program in 2004 that has received nationwide recognition and has inspired several other school districts to launch similar parent "universities" or "colleges" aimed at providing parents with parenting training, as well as increasing access to other adult education options that can contribute directly or indirectly to increased parent participation in student lives.

Measures of Success

Following are the high level Measures of Success to which we will hold ourselves accountable. The Chancellor would propose targets for each measure.

Student Achievement Outcomes
- Percentage of students performing at or above proficiency in reading in Grades 3-8 (BASELINE: 35% at or above proficiency in reading in 2006. (DC CAS)).
- Percentage of students performing at or above proficiency in mathematics in Grades 3-8 (BASELINE: 26% at or above proficiency in mathematics in 2006. (DC CAS)).
- Percentage of students performing at or above proficiency on writing assessment in Grades 4 and 8. (BASELINE: 11% of DCPS 4th graders at or above proficiency in writing; the NAEP national average was 27%. 10% of DCPS 8th graders at or above proficiency in writing; NAEP national average of 30%. (NCES, 2002 Trial Urban District Assessment))
- Narrowing of achievement gap on all academic measures among groups classified by race, ethnicity and socioeconomic status.
  BASELINE:
  Reading: 91% of white students tested at or above proficiency in reading, more than 3 times the rate of black students (29%) and 2.25 times the rate of Hispanic students (40%). (2006 DC CAS)
  Mathematics: 80% of white students tested at or above proficiency in mathematics, 4 times the rate of black students (20%) and 2.6 times the rate of Hispanic students (31%).
- Percentage of students graduating within 5 years (BASELINE: 43% of entering 9th graders graduate within 5 years. (October 2006 DTN))
- Percentage of Advanced Placement exams receiving a score of 3 or higher (BASELINE: DCPS 28%; national average 58%. (College Board, 2006))
- Increase in average score on the SAT, accompanied by increase in percentage of students who take the test will also increase. (BASELINE: 1204 out of 2400. (2006)
- Percentage of students will meet or exceed the national average on the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) in reading, mathematics and science.

- Student performance data will be communicated to parents and students on a regular basis and in a consistent manner.

Timeframe

- These Measurements of Success are in place through the end of the second full fiscal year that the schools are under Mayoral control. If the necessary legislation transferring control to the Mayor is approved by Congress prior to the start of FY2008 (October 1, 2007) then the goals here will go through the end of FY2009 (which ends September 30, 2010). If the necessary legislation is approved after the start of FY2008, then these goals will go through the end of FY2010 (which ends September 30, 2011).

Instructional Staff

- Percentage of effective teaching staff. Effectiveness will be measured by fair and rigorous evaluations, including objective student outcome measures and research-based assessment of instructional practice. Target will be set after a district-wide teacher accountability system has been proposed, evaluated, and adopted.
- Percentage of teaching positions filled on first day of school, and at intervals throughout the year.
- Percentage of key instructional support positions filled at predetermined points during the year. This includes, but is not limited to, math and literacy coaches, and new teacher mentors.

Conditions for Effective Teaching and Learning

- Percentage of "certified" classrooms. Standards will be defined for the "certification" of classroom readiness (necessary instructional materials and supplies). Data to be reported in such a way as to reveal any systematic differences between groups of schools (grade level, poverty level, performance level, etc.)
- Percentage of schools meeting DCPS standards for technology (Baseline standards to be determined.).
- Percentage of schools meeting standards for extra-curricular activities. Minimum standards will be developed for extra-curricular activities at all levels. (Extra-curricular activities are extensions of the core curriculum and provide an opportunity for students to use critical thinking skills learned in the classroom outside of the traditional classroom setting. Examples include chess, Math Olympiad, National Academic League, Debate, Science

Olympiad, Odyssey of the Mind, and Model UN.)   Once minimum standards are set, the baseline percentage of all schools meeting the DCPS standard of extra-curricular activities will be set and tracked moving forward.

- Percentage of schools receiving the top rating(s) on the DCPS SchoolStat Accountability System; (see Appendix 1).

Safe and Orderly Schools

- Percentage of students indicating they feel safe at school. (Survey and baseline data to be completed by end of first year of mayoral control.)
- Percentage of parents indicating they believe schools are safe. (Survey and baseline data to be completed by end of first year of mayoral control.)
- Change in the number of state-reportable incidents of inappropriate behavior per 1,000 students.

Service and Accountability

- Percentage of school employees, parents and community members agreeing that DCPS provides accurate and responsive service on annual satisfaction surveys.

Strong Links with Parents and the Community

- Percentage of DCPS parents agreeing that DCPS is performing well and is on the right course.
- Percentage of community members agreeing that DCPS is performing well and is on the right course.

APPENDIX 1: DCPS SchoolStat Accountability System

SCHOOLSTAT

Context and Purpose

The Fenty Administration has emphasized throughout the District Government a deep commitment to data-driven decision-making, transparency, and accountability to outcomes. Borrowing from what has become common practice in the business sector, and increasingly in the nonprofit and public sectors, the Government of the District of Columbia has instituted CapStat in the Executive Office of the Mayor. In turn, DCPS will institute a "SchoolStat" program, focused on the key outcome and input data of the school district. Baltimore City Public Schools' SchoolStat and Montgomery County Public Schools' M-Stat both provide viable models for applying this approach to school systems.

SchoolStat in DCPS will have the following major objectives:

- *Continuous improvement.* Maximizing progress toward this Administration's ambitious goals for the school system will require constant reflection and course adjustment. Rigorous and regular analyses based on data will fuel and focus that learning process.
- *Performance management.* SchoolStat embodies the adage "what gets measured gets done." The complexity of the school system's work invites a cacophony of individual priorities. When expectations are disparate, progress is diffuse. The SchoolStat approach will drive the kind of shared focus necessary to accelerate change. In turn, adults across the system will be accountable to important outcomes and indicators, supporting a goal-driven culture rather than one focused on bureaucratic compliance.
- *Transparency.* Shining a light on student outcome data and on key inputs provides all members of the community – inside and outside DCPS - with a shared language for discussing the school system's challenges and possible solutions. Progress can be publicly documented and celebrated even as obstacles are laid bare.

Structure and Process

The SchoolStat process will include four basic elements:

- Establishing metrics that reflect key priorities
- Gathering and organizing of data

- Holding SchoolStat sessions, where the key relevant parties examine the data and strategize over what action steps to take in response
- Applying "take-aways" through targeted communication, technical assistance, and follow-up.

Depending on the nature of the data being examined, this cycle will repeat at varying intervals. For example, where a data point is variable over the course of a month (e.g., number of up-to-date IEPs, number of completed work orders, first grade scores on DIBELS), it might be revisited on a frequent basis. Where a data point is fixed for a year (e.g., DC-CAS scores, college completion rate), it could serve as important context for multiple SchoolStat sessions, but would not be analyzed directly more than once a year.

Reflecting the central importance of this strategy, SchoolStat will reside in the Chancellor's office. Based on the established priorities of the district – laid out in this plan, the Master Education Plan, and strategic plan for the operational side – and with the input of staff members at all levels of the organization, the Chancellor will define the key metrics to be tracked and examined. These data points will be a combination of high level outcome data (e.g., DC-CAS results, SAT scores) and critical input data (e.g., algebra completion rates, teacher attendance). The SchoolStat process will work to uncover trends and lessons within the data by disaggregating it by sub-group (e.g., school, student demographics) and by looking for correlations between particular practices and results.

In advance of the formal SchoolStat session, data will be gathered, sliced, and organized in ways that hypothesize the underlying causes of the challenge and possible solutions. SchoolStat sessions themselves will bring together different parties across the school district, depending on the issue being analyzed. Critical to the process will be having at the table the range of functions that impact a particular measure. For example, in focusing on algebra completion rates, it would be important to have Human Resources and Professional Development at the table, in addition to Academic Services and Accountability. Based on the focused analysis during the SchoolStat session, takeaways will be clearly communicated to all relevant parties, with specific expectations for next steps including when data will be revisited.

While the focus of SchoolStat is on high level district priorities, over time the SchoolStat team will provide guidance and technical assistance to functional teams across the district interesting in implementing this strategy at a team level.

Implementation Plan

August 2007	Chancellor establishes system-wide data dashboard, reflecting the key priorities of the district, with the approval of the Mayor
September 2007	Launch of SchoolStat sessions, with focus of familiarizing people with the process
November 2007	First formal session, followed by bi-weekly sessions for remainder of school year
June 2008	Each major function of the school district finalizes its own data dashboard with the approval of the Chancellor
2008-09 School Year	Data dashboards become the central element of the school district's performance management system.